

Award winners list, logo and Award that provides their customers with important environmental performance information and reinforcement of a third party validation to facilitate their purchase decision. The e-commerce Web sites gain incremental visitors, revenue and profits from consumers fulfilling their need to contribute to sustaining the environment.

IN THE CLAIMS

Cancel Claims 1 and 6.

Amend Claims 2 through 5.

Add new claims 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

2. A method as defined by Claim 7 for identifying to consumers via the Internet, in a consumer friendly, industry compatible and timely manner said award-winning vehicles wherein said method includes the steps of:

identifying, by brand name and model, the vehicles offered for sale by different companies in the automotive industry such identification being the same as that used in advertising by the manufacturers and retailers,

producing said ratings at the beginning of the model year of the

industry,

establishing and implementing communication plans for identifying the top environmental performers to consumers for the model year whereby consumers will be enabled to sustain the environment by purchasing the identified vehicles and are benefited by an improved environment.

3. A method as defined by Claim 7 for helping a vehicle manufacturer to increase its sales of vehicles which are among the best in environmental performance ratings, wherein said method includes the steps of:

establishing a national recognition for said ratings and said awards by,

facilitating the use by the vehicle manufacturer of the awards in its advertising and other promotional activity,

[whereby the manufacturer gains marketplace creditability for the environmental performance of its vehicles and gains image enhancement and whereby it can differentiate its products on the basis of environmental performance and third-party validation of its award-winning models.]

4. A method as defined by claim 7 for decreasing the impact of the automotive industry on the environment by enabling consumers to select for purchase those vehicles that have been identified as among the best in environmental performance, wherein said method includes the steps of :

112
developing and implementing a communication plan that is readily understandable and familiar to consumers (award winner better than a non-award winner), thereby gaining recognition and acceptance in the marketplace,

112
facilitating the advertisement and the identification of the top-rated vehicles to induce consumers to buy the top-rated vehicles (i.e. the award winners),

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whereby the impact of vehicles on the environment will be decreased.

5. A method as defined by claim 7 for helping automotive e-commerce businesses including e-commerce product information services and e-commerce buying services increase the number of visitors to their web sites,

said e-commerce company establishing links between its web site and the web sites of said automotive e-commerce businesses to permit visitors to the web sites of said automotive e-commerce businesses to obtain independent verification of ratings and awards,

[whereby said automotive e-commerce businesses will enjoy a better public image for providing environmental performance data and whereby consumer-usable environmental information will favorably differentiate the automotive e-commerce businesses and provide increased revenue for them.]

7. A method of developing and communicating information regarding the automotive industry said method providing a market-driven system for sustaining the environment by using the Internet, said method comprising the steps of:

identifying cars and light-trucks as a class of vehicles manufactured by the automotive industry [from which consumers may choose a vehicle for purchase and for which consumers may desire to have environmental performance information to consider as a factor in selecting a vehicle for purchase;] developing an objective environmental performance rating system based upon a rating algorithm driven by quality assured data, obtaining said data over the Internet from government sources and private sector sources;

appointing an e-commerce company and, having it perform or engage others to perform the steps of:

processing said data into ratings in accordance with said algorithm and identifying the vehicles which are more environmentally sensitive than others;

establishing an Internet web site and communicating via said web site to consumers and other stake-holders certain attributes of the rating system and the identification, of vehicles having high ratings as determined by said algorithm;

presenting awards in recognition of the most environmentally sensitive vehicles to the manufacturers of those vehicles;

[granting to each manufacturer of an award winning vehicle, the opportunity of a license to display said award in its advertising;

[whereby consumers desiring to help sustain the environment are enabled to select and buy a vehicle that is among the top environmentally sensitive vehicles of the available vehicles and companies offering such vehicles achieve increased sales and are encouraged thereby to develop and sell new vehicles that are more environmentally sensitive;]

[and whereby the environment is improved because more environmentally sensitive vehicles are purchased and developed instead of less environmentally sensitive vehicles, thereby establishing a market-driven, as opposed to government regulated, approach to sustaining the environment.]

8. The method defined by claim 7 including the step of:

said e-commerce company facilitating the promotion of the results of said environmental performance evaluation in accordance with said ratings by companies winning the awards and by e-commerce product information/buying services to communicate to consumers and other stake-holders, via the Internet and other media, identification of the vehicles which are the most environmentally sensitive.

9. A method of developing and communicating information regarding an industry, said method providing a market-driven system for sustaining the environment by using the Internet, said method comprising the steps of:

selecting an industry from a group of industries having a need for improved environmental communications and marketing for its products, identifying a class of products manufactured by the selected industry from which consumers may choose a product for purchase and for which consumers may desire to have environmental performance information to consider as a factor in selecting a product for purchase, developing an objective environmental performance rating system based upon a rating algorithm driven by quality assured data, obtaining said data over the Internet from government sources and private sector sources;

✓ appointing an e-commerce company and having it perform or engage others to perform the steps of:

✓ determining the generally accepted language of the industry to identify its products to consumers in the marketplace,

✓ processing said data into ratings in accordance with said algorithm and identifying the products which are more environmentally sensitive than others;

✓ establishing an Internet web site and communicating via said web site to consumers and other stakeholders certain attributes of the rating system and the identification of products having high ratings as determined by said algorithm;

presenting awards in recognition of the most environmentally sensitive products, using the generally accepted language of the industry to identify the award-winning products, to the manufacturers of those products;

→ [granting to each manufacturer of an award winning product, the opportunity of a license to display said award in its advertising;

[whereby consumers desiring to help sustain the environment are enabled to select and buy a product that is among the top environmentally sensitive products of the available products and companies offering such products achieve increased sales and are encouraged thereby to develop and sell products that are more environmentally sensitive;

and whereby the environment is improved because more environmentally sensitive products are purchased and developed instead of less environmentally sensitive products, thereby establishing a market-driven, as opposed to government regulated, approach to sustaining the environment.]

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10. The method defined by Claim 9 including the step of:

said e-commerce company facilitating the promotion of the results of said environmental performance evaluation in accordance with said ratings by companies winning the awards and by e-commerce product information/buying services to communicate to consumers and other stakeholders, via the Internet and other media, identification of the vehicles which are most environmentally sensitive.

products
11. A method as defined by Claim 9 for identifying to consumers via the Internet, in a consumer friendly, industry compatible and timely manner said award-winning products wherein said method includes the steps of:

identifying, by brand name and model, the products offered for sale by different companies in an industry such identification being the same as that used in advertising by the manufacturers and retailers,

producing said ratings at the beginning of the model year of the industry,

establishing and implementing communication plans for identifying the top environmental performers to consumers for the model year whereby consumers will be enabled to sustain the environment by purchasing the identified products and are benefited by an improved environment.

23
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12. A method as defined by Claim 9 for helping a product manufacturer to increase its sales of products which are among the best in environmental performance ratings, wherein said method includes the steps of:

establishing a national recognition for said ratings and said awards by,
facilitating the use by the product manufacturer of the rating system and the use of the awards in its advertising and other promotional activity,

whereby the manufacturer gains marketplace creditability for the environmental performance of its products and gains image enhancement and whereby it can differentiate its products on the basis of environmental performance and third-party validation of its award-winning models.

13. A method as defined by claim 9 for decreasing the impact of the on the environment by enabling consumers to select for purchase those products that have been identified as among the best in environmental performance, wherein said method includes the steps of :

developing and implementing a communication plan that gains recognition and acceptance for the rating system,

facilitating the advertisement and the identification of the top-rated products to induce consumers to buy the top-rated products,

whereby the impact of products on the environment will be decreased.

14. A method as defined by claim 9 for helping product-related e-commerce businesses including e-commerce product information services and e-commerce buying services increase the number of visitors to their web sites,

said e-commerce company establishing links between its web site and the web sites of said product-related e-commerce businesses to permit visitors to the web sites of said product-related e-commerce businesses to obtain independent verification of ratings and awards,

whereby said product-related e-commerce businesses will enjoy a better public image for providing environmental performance data and whereby consumer-usable environmental information will favorably differentiate the product-related e-commerce businesses and provide increased revenue for them.